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PRELIMINARY REPORT OF AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL EXPEDITION TO SYRIA

By HENRY MINOR HUXLEY

Under the leadership of Howard Crosby Butler, an archeological expedition¹ was sent to Syria in the summer of 1899. The work of this expedition was accomplished in two trips: the first occupying eight weeks from the middle of October, 1899; the second lasting from March until June, 1900. On the second of these trips, a section for the study of physical anthropology was added to the three other sections of research to which the expedition was devoted.

At the end of this second trip, the four original members of the expedition left Syria; whereas the writer, under the patronage of Mr B. T. Babbitt Hyde, remained for another year for the further study of physical anthropology.

The summer of 1900 was devoted to acquiring a working knowledge of the vernacular Arabic. For this purpose, I lived for nearly four months in Bhamdūn, a small village of the Lebanon. With the valuable aid of my Arabic teacher, Sitt Rāhîl Jurjis Tâbit, I was able to collect many of the wedding and funeral songs of the natives of Bhamdūn, most of whom are Christians, of either the Maronite or Greek Orthodox sects. These songs, besides a considerable number of proverbs and stories, have been phonetically transliterated, and then translated into English. They are now nearly ready for publication.

In the middle of October, accompanied by native attendants, I left Beirût; after going to Damascus, we marched north to

¹ For the Preliminary Report of this expedition, see *American Journal of Archaeology*, Second Series, *Journal of the Archaeological Institute of America*, vol. iv (1900), No. 4.

Ma'lûla. This village, inhabited by Christians, and the neighboring Mohammedan villages of Djebb 'Adîn and Bukh'âh are of particular interest, in that the people still speak the ancient Syriac, as well as Arabic. Traveling about three weeks in the desert to the east of Homş and Hamâ, we were able to make observations on the fellâhîn of the plain, and on several tribes of the 'Anezi Bedawins. From Hamâ we marched north to Fân ish-Shemâli and Kaşr Khulef, in both of which places Greek inscriptions were found. Going north to is-Şafîreh, we then turned east and reached the Euphrates at Meskinah. The region between Hamâ and the Euphrates is inhabited almost exclusively by Bedawins: either the nomadic tribes or those who now inhabit villages of cone-shaped houses built of sun-dried clay bricks.

From Meskinah we went north to Membedj, and then through the country of the Turkmân to 'Aintab, the northernmost point which we reached. North of a line between Aleppo and Meskinah, the houses have flat roofs, in marked contrast to the cone-shaped houses between Hamâ and the Euphrates. Coming south to Aleppo, we next entered Djebel in-Nuşairîyeh at Djîr ish-Shughr. The Nuşairîyeh, who have a secret religion entirely distinct from Mohammedanism, are markedly brachycephalic, and resemble the mountaineers of the Lebanon far more closely than the Bedawins of the country to the east. Reaching the sea at Djebîleh, we returned along the coast to Beirût.

During the winter months, when travel is very difficult, I remained most of the time in Beirût. For three weeks, however, I made observations on the Samaritans in Nâblus. From a list containing the names and ages of all the living Samaritans, I have obtained the following statistics :

Number of males 15 or more years of age.....	72
Number of females 12 or more years of age.....	44
Number of males less than 15 years of age.	25
Number of females less than 12 years of age.....	11

Total number of males.....	97
Total number of females.....	55
Total number of Samaritans, February, 1901.....	152

Of the males, 43 were measured and photographed. A cast of the face of one of the sons of the High Priest was also taken. Besides the work in physical anthropology, observations were made of some of the customs of the Samaritans.

In Jerusalem an attempt was made to measure and photograph some of the Abyssinians, but in this I was wholly unsuccessful.

On the first of April we again went into the field. Starting from Beirût, we marched southeast through Bânyâs, Kunêtrah, Simlîn, and Khufsîn, to Ȣumakh, on the southern shore of the Lake of Galilee. Most of the important ruins east of the Jordan were then visited: Mkês, Sûf, Djerash, 'Ammân, Mâdaba, and Karak. A few days before our arrival at 'Ammân, the Circassian inhabitants, in digging the foundation for a house, found a large white marble statue of a draped female figure. The head, arms, and feet were missing. The fragment is 132 cms. long, and has a maximum breadth of 69 cms. From Karak we marched south through Ȣafîleh to Petra, where we remained five days. Returning to Ȣafîleh we crossed the Ghôr, south of the Dead sea. From Hebron, we traveled north through the well-known country west of the Jordan. At 'Akka we reached the sea, and returned to Beirût along the coast.

At Jerusalem I examined a few of the Gypsies of Syria. They have adopted the Mohammedan religion and many of the customs of the country. They speak Arabic, but among themselves speak Gypsy fluently. Many of their words have exactly the same forms as are found in Hindu Gypsy words, some of which were sent me by Mr A. T. Sinclair of Boston.

On the various trips the following groups of people were studied: the Christians of the Lebanon; the fellâhîn of northern and central Syria, including both the fellâhîn of the mountains and those of the plains; the Bedawins of the Northern

tribes; the Turkmân; the Nuşairîyeh; the Druses of Haurân; the fellâhîn of the country east of the Jordan; the Bedawin tribes of the same region; the fellâhîn of western Palestine; the Samaritans; and the Gypsies. I attempted to procure some observations on a tribe of Bedawins called 'Arab is-Şlêb, but I was able to measure only three individuals. The members of this tribe have a tradition that they are descended from Crusaders who took Bedawin wives. At present they profess Mohammedanism.

The observations taken on the living consisted of a series of measurements, descriptive characteristics, and photographs. The total number of individuals measured was 804. At times the prejudices of the people rendered this work quite difficult; whatever success we attained is due to no small extent to the tact of my native attendant, Milhem As'ad Dlêkân. Most of the photographs included only the head and shoulders of the subject, front and profile views being taken on opposite halves of the plate. A device was used for bringing that half of the plate to be exposed, directly behind the lens when the photograph was taken. A series of twenty casts was made.

Of the collections, the most important is a series of twenty-five skulls from the Samaritan cemetery at Nâblus. A series of twelve Bedawin skulls was obtained from Khirbit is-Sûk, near 'Amman. A series of the costumes of the inhabitants of the various regions of Syria was secured. These collections have been deposited at the American Museum of Natural History in New York.

Von Luschan¹ has noted that in Asia Minor there are two very distinct types of people: the one dolichocephalic, the other brachycephalic. He considers that this brachycephalic type, now represented by the Armenians, is a remnant of a completely unified aboriginal population. He infers that the same conditions hold true in Syria, but says that the material from the latter country

¹ "Die Tachtadschy und andere Ueberreste der alten Bevolkerung Lykiens," *Archiv für Anthropologie*, Bd. xix (1890), p. 31.

is not sufficient for us to judge with accuracy. According to the observations made on the present expedition, there are in Syria, as in Asia Minor, the two sharply defined types: the dolichocephalic Bedawins, of Semitic origin, and the brachycephalic fellâhîn and mountaineers. In some districts the shape of the head is somewhat modified by the method of cradling, but the deformation is not sufficient to vitiate the value of the measurements. There are many cases of mesocephalic individuals, showing a mixture of the two original types.

The work in Syria was completed by the end of June, 1901, when I returned to America. The publication of the material in physical anthropology will be made in connection with the publications of the original archeological expedition, of which the writer was a member. My thanks are due in particular to Prof. F. W. Putnam, of Cambridge, and to Dr Franz Boas, of New York, who have made most valuable suggestions in connection with the anthropological work.